

Jim Benson, pianist and songwriter

People often ask me who I have to thank for my success as a pianist and songwriter. They expect to hear that I was born into a musical family and had an excellent piano teacher. However, the truth is different. When I was little, nobody played an instrument at home. I learnt to play the piano and sing because there was a piano in my house and I just wanted to make music.

My parents allowed me to sit at the piano and sing for as long as I wanted. If they were afraid that I would break the old piano, they never mentioned it. They didn't suggest that I should take lessons, either. The songs just came to me when I had my hands on the piano. I suppose I had musical talent and that is all you need.

I started writing proper songs when I was a teenager. The music was mine, but the words were from other song writers. It seemed so easy. When you start to compose, you do that, you copy other people's best songs. Then you start changing the melodies and the words and you develop your own style. That only happened later, when I had grown beyond my teenage years.

For a time, I thought music would be just a hobby. My parents had developed a strong belief that I would be able to make a living as a musician, but I had my doubts, so after school I took a job in radio advertising. Then one day one of my songs won a prize and that changed everything. I realized my happiness was in music. I have been a musician ever since that day.

21 What is Jim Benson's main purpose in writing the text?

- A to suggest how children can be taught music
- B to describe his life as a successful musician
- C to explain how he became a musician
- D to complain about his lack of musical training

22 When Jim Benson started making music on the piano, his parents

- A seemed happy to let him play it.
- B said the piano might get damaged.
- C saw the need for a piano teacher.
- D wanted him to play his own songs.

23 What does Jim Benson say about the songs he wrote as a teenager?

- A They were not well-written.
- B They took a long time to write.
- C They were not very original.
- D They showed his personal style.

24 Jim Benson took a job in advertising because

- A his parents suggested it was a good career for him.
- B he thought he might not earn enough as a musician.
- C he had learnt about advertising jobs at school.
- D it offered him the opportunity to change his life.

25 Which advice would Jim Benson give talented young people?

A

You need somebody
in your family to guide
you when you start.

B

It's OK to copy other
people's songs when
you are learning.

C

It is not a good idea to
write songs when you
are very young.

D

If you want to be
successful, you must
have good music
teachers.